

Message Text

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COMUSMACTHAI BANGKOK THAI

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MCAP, PFOR, TH, US, MASS

SUBJECT: TURNOVER OF INTEGRATED COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM

REF: A. BANGKOK 1990; B. STATE 028673; C. STATE 035845

SUMMARY: EMBASSY APPRECIATES THAT TURNOVER OF INTEGRATED COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM (ICS) IS RELATED TO DRAWDOWN QUESTION AS STATED REF B. WE HOPE RECENT DECISIONS CONCERNING FUTURE FORCE LEVELS (REF C) WILL EVENTUALLY PERMIT DISCUSSION OF ICS TURNOVER WITH THE ROYAL THAI GOVERNMENT (RTG). RTG WILL NEED TO OBTAIN APPROVAL FOR INCLUSION OF FUTURE ICS COSTS IN MILITARY BUDGET, AND THIS WILL REQUIRE SUBSTANTIAL ADVANCE PLANNING. IN ADDITION WE BELIEVE CERTAIN PORTIONS OF ICS WHICH ARE NOT INVOLVED WITH DRAWDOWN BUT ARE OF GREAT INTEREST TO THE THAI MILITARY CAN AND SHOULD BE TREATED INDEPENDENTLY OF THE DRAWDOWN. END SUMMARY.

1. WE APPRECIATE FACT POINTED OUT IN REF B THAT AUTHORITY TO TURN OVER ICS IS BOUND UP IN BROADER QUESTION OF FUTURE DISPOSITION OF US FORCES IN THAILAND. WE HOPE RECENT DECISIONS CONCERNING FORCE LEVELS WILL EVENTUALLY PERMIT DISCUSSION OF ICS TURNOVER CONCEPT WITH RTG. PORTIONS OF THE SYSTEM, HOWEVER, WILL BE AFFECTED VERY

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SOON BY DECISIONS WHICH HAVE ALREADY BEEN MADE. FOR

EXAMPLE, WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE USAF PRESENCE AT UBON RTAFB, PRESENTLY IN CARETAKER STATUS, IS SCHEDULED TO END IN THE FIRST QUARTER OF FY 76. AT THAT TIME UBON ICS STATION (LOCATED ON THE AIRBASE) WILL CLOSE. THIS CLOSURE COULD ADVERSELY AFFECT THE COMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITY OF RTG AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL FACILITIES WHICH DIRECT US AIRCRAFT FLYING WITHIN THE STATION'S AREA OF COVERAGE. AUTHORITY TO INITIATE DISCUSSIONS CONCERNING TURNOVER OF THIS ICS STATION TO THE THAI COULD LEAD TO JOINT MANNING OF THE STATION AND ENABLE US TO WORK TOWARD EFFECTING CONTINUED AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL FOR US AIRCRAFT. IT WOULD ALSO LEAVE INTACT AN IMPORTANT LINK IN THE THAI MILITARY COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM, AND PROVIDE COMMUNICATIONS FOR RESIDUAL US USERS IN THE UBON AREA. (7TH RRFs DETACHMENT)

2. IN ADDITION TO PORTIONS OF THE ICS SYSTEM AFFECTED BY THE DRAWDOWN, WE THINK CERTAIN LINKS WHICH ARE IMPORTANT TO THE THAI MILITARY BUT WILL NOT BE AFFECTED BY THE DRAWDOWN CAN AND SHOULD BE DEALT WITH INDEPENDENTLY OF THE FORCE LEVEL QUESTION. FOR EXAMPLE, WE RECENTLY LEARNED OF SUPREME COMMAND INTEREST IN USING SEVERAL CHANNELS ON THE PORTION OF THE ICS SYSTEM THAT CONNECTS CHIANG MAI AND KHO KHA. IN EXCHANGE FOR THE USE OF THESE CHANNELS, THEY HAVE OFFERED TO MAN AND OPERATE ONE OR BOTH SITES. THIS COULD WORK TO OUR MUTUAL ADVANTAGE. SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT WOULD ELIMINATE THE NEED FOR THE THAI TO INSTALL THEIR OWN COSTLY MULTI-CHANNEL RADIO FOR COMMUNICATION FROM DOI INTHANON TO PHITSANULOE. AT THE SAME TIME, WE COULD SAVE THE COSTS OF THE CONTRACTS LET TO OPERATE THESE TWO COMMUNICATION SITES. (THIS WOULD ALSO REDUCE THE TOTAL NUMBER OF CONTRACTORS IN COUNTRY.)

3. WE ANTICIPATE OTHER OPPORTUNITIES TO COOPERATE IN JOIN MANNING AND PLANNING FOR THAI AND US COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS WHICH COULD BE MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL. IN ORDER TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THESE, HOWEVER, WE NEED AUTHORIZATION TO DISCUSS THEM WITH THAI AUTHORITIES. SUCH DISCUSSIONS MUST IN MANY CASES AWAIT MORE DETAILED DECISIONS ABOUT FUTURE FORCE LEVELS, BUT IN OTHER CASES,

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SUCH AS THE ICS SITE AT UBON (PARA 1), THE DECISION HAS ALREADY BEEN MADE AND THE LONGER WE WAIT TO DISCUSS THE TURNOVER CONCEPT WITH THE RTG THE MORE DIFFICULT IT WILL BE TO WORK OUT ARRANGEMENTS ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH SIDES. IF WE DELAY DISCUSSION TOO LONG THE ICS, WHICH COULD BE AN ASSET IN A PERIOD OF DECLINING MAP, MAY BECOME A LIABILITY AND EVEN A REMINDER OF OUR FAILURE TO CONSULT ADEQUATELY WITH THE THAI CONCERNING THE FUTURE

OF THE AMERICAN PRESENCE HERE.

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